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REMARKS

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 5, 25-34 and 41 contain allowable subject matter.

In the Office Action dated March 9, 2005, claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by DeBusk et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,628,724. Claim 34 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Heinecke et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,520,629. Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over DeBusk '724 in view of Ward U.S. Patent No. 4,753,232. Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over DeBusk '724 in view of Heinecke '629. Reconsideration of the application as amended is requested.

Applicant respectfully submits that DeBusk '724 cannot anticipate claim 1 for the following reasons. Claim 1 recites a polymeric film with a first adhesive coated on a first side of the polymeric film and a handle adhered to a second non-adhesive side of the polymeric film with a pressure sensitive adhesive, whereby the handle can be removed from the polymeric film once the polymeric film is adhered to a patient's skin. In contrast, the tabs 26 and carrier 24 of DeBusk '724 are removed from the dressing 20 together as a unit after the dressing is adhered to the patient's skin. Column 5, lines 38-44. The tabs 26 are securely adhered to the carrier 24 via adhesive 28, and the tabs 26 remain connected to the carrier 24 at all times. Thus, the carrier 24 of DeBusk '724 cannot be a film with handles that are removed from a non-adhesive side of the film as recited in claim 1. Also, the carrier 24 of DeBusk '724 cannot be the handle of claim 1, because the handle of claim 1 projects beyond an edge of the polymeric film and overlies the release liner.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that DeBusk '724 does not anticipate claim 1, and the rejection should be withdrawn. Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 depend from claim 1, and are therefore believed to be allowable for those reasons set forth above in connection with claim 1.

Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form, and has been amended to recite that at least a portion of the pressure sensitive adhesive contacts the release liner. In contrast, Fig. 10 of Ward '232 discloses a protector 42 that covers the adhesive and prevents the adhesive from contacting the release liner. Also, the arrangement of Fig. 5 of Ward '232 utilizes adhesive

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only at the narrow margins 9, such that the adhesive does not contact the liner. Thus, Ward '232 does not disclose or suggest a handle having an undersurface that is entirely coated with pressure sensitive adhesive, with at least a portion of the pressure sensitive adhesive contacting the release liner. Applicant submits that Ward '232 actually teaches away from such an arrangement because the arrangements of Figs. 5 and 10 are configured to avoid contact between the adhesive on the tabs and the release liner.

Claim 5 depends from claim 4, and is therefore believed to be allowable for those reasons set forth above in connection with claim 4.

Claim 34, as amended, recites a release liner and a layer of thin polymeric film having an adhesive coated lower surface adhered to the release liner, and an upper surface having a handle attached thereto. Overlapping portions of the handle and the release liner project beyond an edge of the polymeric film and overlap one another. Adhesive contacts the overlapping portions. In contrast, the adhesive 34 of Heinecke '629 does not in any way contact or adhere together overlapping portions of the carrier 38 and release liner 36.

Accordingly, Heinecke '629 is not believed to disclose or suggest the arrangement of amended claim 34.

Applicant has made a concerted effort to the place the present application in condition for allowance, and a notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. In the event there are any remaining informalities, the courtesy of a telephone call to the undersigned attorney would be appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

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